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MR. BORBANDI: Dear Listeners! At the Soviet Writers' Congress in Moscow, a letter written by Alexander Solzhenitsyn was circulated among the delegates. The Congress did not discuss the letter but, according to Moscow correspondents, it was an important topic of private discussions among the several hundred writers who arrived in the capital. The author of "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich", a very successful novel known also in Hungary, protested censorship and called upon his fellow writers to support the cause of literary freedom. According to Moscow reports, Solzhenitsyn sent this letter to the Presidium of the Congress, to more than 100 writer-delegates, editors of literary magazines, leaders of cultural organizations, publishing houses, and to the Minister of Education. The letter became known in the West on the basis of reports sent by Moscow correspondents. The Paris daily LE MONDE has also published the text of the letter.

Solzhenitsyn's letter consists of three parts. In the first part he suggested that the Writers' Congress should examine the problem of oppression of Soviet literature. According to the Soviet author, this oppression is being done in the form of censorship which--as he put it--is in the long run unbearable. Censorship was not provided for in the Constitution and is therefore--if still exercised--illegal. Censorship is a heritage of the Middle Ages, which has survived until our present days. Solzhenitsyn then quoted a number of examples showing that censorship had prevented the publication of outstanding works. He mentioned names whose works could not be published, or could only be published after their deaths, because censorship prevented the writers from placing their works before the readers. "Our country and world literature are the great losers," said the author of "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich." It is due to this censorship that Russian literature has lost the international prestige it had enjoyed at the end of the last and at the beginning of this century. Solzhenitsyn called upon the Soviet writers to deal with the open or hidden forms of censorship and he also demanded an end to the requirement that publishing houses obtain prior authorization for all publications.

The second part of the Soviet author's letter concerned the activity of the Writers' Union. According to Solzhenitsyn the statutes of the Soviet Writers' Union concerning the obligations of the Union in the field of the protection of

its members have not been worded in an unequivocal form. It has instead been proved that for the last three decades, the Union has failed to defend its members. It did not protest against the arrest, the imprisonment or assassination of Soviet writers. In this context Solzhenitsyn mentioned names of writer-victims of the era of Stalinist terror. The Writers' Union has failed to intervene on their behalf; it instead placed itself at the head of the persecutors. For this reason Solzhenitsyn suggested that the Union should revise the pertinent statutes. He said they should include stipulations providing for the defense by the Union of authors subjected to persecution.

Finally, in the third part of the letter, the distinguished Russian author related his own calvary. He spoke of the number of administrative measures by which he had been prevented from publishing his works, from speaking on the radio, from contacting his readers. He related the slanders, abuses, attacks, official harrassments designed to break him in spirit and ruin his reputation before his readers. Several of his short stories couldn't be published because the authorities did not like them. His works which have appeared in various magazines could not be published in a separate volume because this had been prevented by bureaucracy. Because of references to alleged state security interests, several of his works could never reach the public. The Soviet author concluded his letter by saying: all he wanted was to fulfill his role as a writer. At the same time he is ready to pay for this protest by sacrificing his person and, if necessary, even his life. "I don't care what happens to me, I am ready to make personal sacrifices for every contemporary Soviet writer," Solzhenitsyn said.

This much for Alexander Solzhenitsyn's letter which again is an outstanding evidence of the decency and moral courage of a writer.